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Using Rewald's CIA Link as Diversion

The strange case of Ronald Rewald has just been given another airing by a national news organization, this time ABC-TV. The report, which appeared this week, includes allegations that Rewald's company, Bishop, Baldwin, Rewald, Dillingham & Wong, was involved in a number of secret projects for the CIA and that Rewald was a CIA agent. The most sensational claim, however, was that the CIA wanted Rewald killed to keep him from talking.

The report showed an informant who claimed he got a job as a prison guard here in order to observe Rewald for the CIA while he was incarcerated. The informant then said he was told by the CIA to kill Rewald, but refused. No indication was given that an overt attempt on Rewald's life was ever made.

None of these allegations has ever been admitted or verified, although it has been generally accepted that the CIA used the Rewald firm as a cover or mail drop for some covert operations. Readers of mystery thrillers, of course, would be sadly disappointed if the CIA connection turned out to be so innocuous.

But it is not necessary to reach firm conclusions about such allegations in order to see what Rewald is trying to do: divert attention from the charges that he defrauded investors of millions of dollars. Whatever misdeeds the CIA may or may not have committed, it is not supposed to be swindling people in an investment scheme, and there is no indication that it has.

On the other hand, the president of Rewald's firm, Sunlin Wong, has pleaded guilty to charges of mail and securities fraud, a fact not mentioned in the ABC-TV report.

It is Rewald, not the CIA, who is under indictment, and the charges do not deal with covert CIA operations. Rewald's allegations about the CIA are a smokescreen intended to obscure that fact. Even if all of them were true, they would not absolve him of responsibility for the crimes of which he is accused.

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